THE CONFURENCE GROUP PRESENTS:

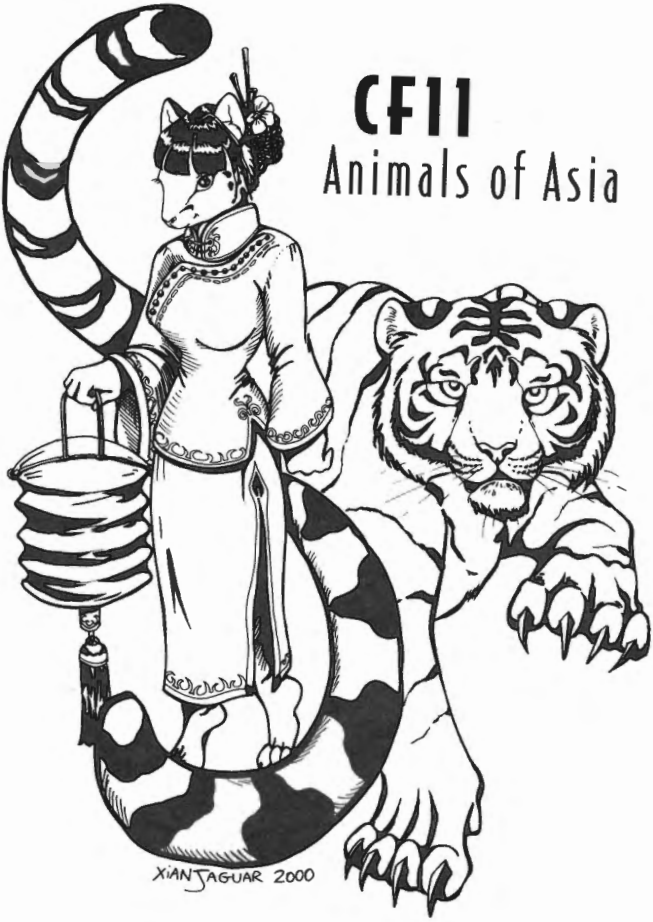
CONFURENCE 11

YEAR OF THE DRAGON!

FURRIES IN ASIA!

APRIL 6 TO APRIL 9, 2000 IRVINE CALIFORNIA

CF11
Animals of Asia



ConFurence® 11

2000
Souvenir Book

"Funny Animals in Asia"

The Year of the Dragon

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Front cover art by Mitch Beiro

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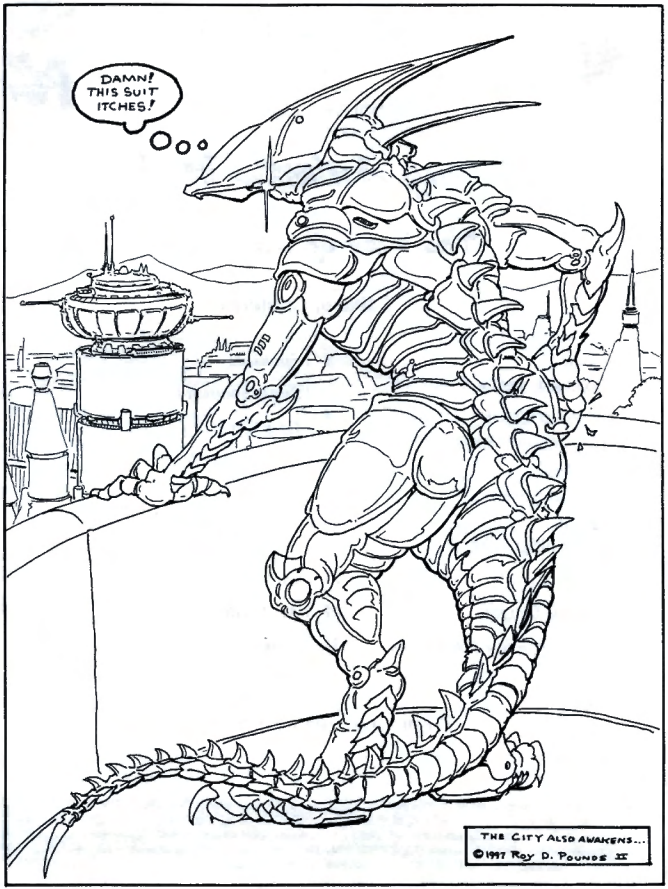
DAMN! THIS SUIT ITCHES!
THE CITY ALSO AWAKENS...
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Change can be a good thing

-or- "Welcome to ConFurence 11" by Darrel L. Exline

Welcome to the 12th year of *the International Anthropomorphic Convention and Exhibition*, more commonly known as ConFurence® 11. Look around, and you'll see the same crowd of people, but when you look closer you may notice some subtle, yet important changes.

The ownership of ConFurence changed hands in April of 1999 following ConFurence 10 in San Diego. Mark Merlino and Rod O'Riley, the original creators of ConFurence, announced they were stepping down as Co-Chairs, and Zsa'nene Klinkler and myself were elected by CF10's staff to take their place and continue the tradition.

Taking a lead role, I immediately created a new company called "The ConFurence Group" to run the business side of the convention. The ConFurence Group's goal is to promote anthropomorphic fandom related events, notably ConFurence. Later this year, we are hosting a Mini-convention in San Diego called "CritterConDiego", and possibly others if the opportunity arises.

You'll see a lot of familiar faces at this year's event, as I made it a point to keep those people on staff who knew their jobs from experience. There are a lot of new faces as well, as I spent most of mid-1999 visiting other conventions and recruiting some of their best people to fill in the gaps. The crew I've assembled this year will continue to improve, hopefully to make ConFurence into a "World Class Convention."

Some of the more direct changes are the least visible and only affect the higher-level operations of the convention. Our new staff hierarchy is one of these changes, establishing a clear chain of command for each department. The merchant banking account opened by The ConFurence Group allows us to accept credit cards for payments in the Art Show and memberships, and should make processing funds after the convention faster than previous years. We have also taken steps to ensure the integrity of The ConFurence Group's intellectual property. The "Paw-on-globe" logo is officially a trademark of, and the term "ConFurence" is a registered service mark of The ConFurence Group.

We are committed to keeping ConFurence in the Los Angeles / Orange County metropolitan area ensuring that our core group of staff members always have easy access to the convention. This highly populated area also makes it easier for the convention to be positioned near major airports so that traveling to and from the convention is as convenient and inexpensive as possible.

We have also moved the convention away from Easter weekend, as that, along with a few other factors, played a part in turning ConFurence 10 into a disaster. Attendance for the first time took a dip from the previous year's numbers. This year is already looking like it just might break a record for attendance *(I'm keeping my fingers crossed!).*

Next year's event "ConFurence 12: At the Movies" is going to be located just minutes from Hollywood in Burbank, California. We've already signed the contract with the Burbank Airport Hilton for April 19th to the 22nd, right across the street from the Burbank Airport. Our locality next year to major television and movie studios may also prove beneficial in finding guests for the convention.

In all likelihood, Burbank may turn out to be the perfect ConFurence home for many years to come, as several other conventions have discovered. This also gives us access to a pool of experienced con-staff from LosCon, AgamemCon, and several others who have already used this hotel and whose knowledge and assistance would be invaluable.

I hope that last year's hard work in establishing a new business model for the con results in an enjoyable event for everyone. In closing, I'd like to extend my thanks and gratitude to all the Staff members of ConFurence 11, as without their support, this convention could never have happened.

Christopher Rowley

Writer Guest of Honor

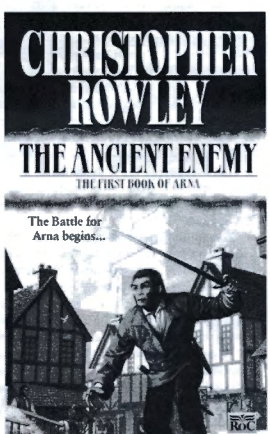
The story so far....

I came up in England in the mid-sixties, just another atom in the youth quake of that era. Those were great days, sometimes I wonder how I survived it all.

In 1977 I moved to New York. Many reasons. I started thinking seriously about writing a Science Fiction novel. In a surreal twist I got a job writing "Violent World" Magazine in an office tower on 42nd street. A chance encounter on a bus to Giants stadium to see a soccer match lead not only to "Violent World", but also to my living in Manhattan's East Village for twelve years. "Violent World" died after six months when the distributor refused the "Monster Mutant Babies" issue about farm laborers routinely sprayed with herbicides, but I found freelance work and then the wonderful woman who later became my wife and I never did go back to my flat in London.

In 1983 Del Rey published my first novel, "The War for Eternity." Sales were pretty good. It was also published in the UK, Japan and more recently in Russia. In 1984, "The War for Eternity" won the Compton Crook Award from the Baltimore Science Fiction Society as the best first novel in the field for 83.

After that I wrote a sequel, "The Black Ship" which came out in 1985. Then came "Starhammer" in 1986, set in a different time and future. Also in 85 I had the great good fortune to get the call to work with Robert Mandel on producing the 65 episodes of the "The Adventures of the Galaxy Rangers"-- a tv animation show. I wrote ten eps and helped out as script editor in that crazy winter of 85-86 when the show was written, drawn and animated. It was a great experience. "Galaxy Rangers" was aired in the US in the 86/87 seasons.



Meanwhile, I continued writing Science Fiction, with "The Vang- the Military Form", "Golden Sunlands," "The Founder," "The Vang- Battlemaster" and "To a Highland Nation" all coming out from Del Rey Books in the late eighties and early nineties.

During this period I tinkered with various ideas for a fantasy novel. I hated most of the dragons I came across in contemporary fantasy fiction. They were usually stupid and often vicious. I have always had a thing for animal characters (animals too) and it'd occurred to me that it was past time to switch it around and let the dragons take on the role of heroes. Pretty soon I had the basics of "Bazil Broketail" and I began to work it up.

Alas, Lester Del Rey didn't care for my idea of dragon liberation so I took Bazil to Penguin's ROC imprint, where I've remained ever since. At about the same time my wife and I moved out of New York city and took up country living.

"Bazil Broketail" was published in 1992 and did well enough for ROC to want more of the adventures of a certain dragon and his boy. Since then there have been seven further books set on their world, Ryetelth, six detailing their adventures and a seventh, "The Wizard and the Floating City" which concerns other characters.

After finishing "Dragon Ultimate" I was ready for a change and it took the form of a somewhat different kind of fantasy story, beginning with The First Book of Arna, "The Ancient Enemy" published in February 2000. The Second Book of Arna, "The Shasht War" is finished and due for publication in 2001 and the Third Book is underway but remains untitled as I write this.

And after that? Well I have received a number of inquiries regarding some kind of Return of the Dragon, but I've made no definite plans as yet, though that old dragon may be getting tired of farming.

Bibliography

The FENRILLE set.	
The War for Eternity	*1983 Del Rey Books*
The Black Ship	*1985 Del Rey Books*
The Founder	*1989 Del Rey Books*
To a Highland Nation	*1993 Del Rey Books*
Starhammer/Vang set.	
Starhammer	*1986 Del Rey Books*
The Vang-The Military Form	*1988 Del Rey Books*
The Vang-The Battlemaster	*1990 Del Rey Books*
Golden Sunlands	*1987 Del Rey Books*
The RYETELTH set.	
Bazil Broketail	*1992 ROC*
A Sword for A Dragon	*1993 ROC*
Dragons of War	*1994 ROC*
Battledragon	*1995 ROC*
The Wizard and the Floating City	*1996 ROC*
A Dragon at Worlds' End	*1997 ROC*
Dragons of Argonath	*1998 ROC*
Dragon Ultimate	*1999 ROC*
The Books of ARNA	
The Ancient Enemy	*2000 ROC*
The Shasht War	*2001 ROC*

BEIRO MM—

Mitch Beiro

Artist Guest of Honor

Born September 10, 1965 (Ha! Virgo! Naturally, since if I get laid the world will end!) Started doing art thingys at a very young age, drawing mostly spaceships and monsters until came Star Trek and later Star Wars, which boosted my drawing interest greatly. During this time as most kids do, I watched a variety of cartoons, favorites being Star Trek Animated (natch) and toon stuff like Woody Woodpecker and Adventures of Waldo Kitty. Land of the Lost was a great interest of mine as well.

About 1978, I really got into Woody Woodpecker as fan and collector. This interest was the prime source of my desire to draw anthropomorphic characters. In Jr. High, 79…I drew my first furry creation- a sort of mouse in space, but it looked a lot like Woody. 1979 was also a prime influence for my technical art in the form of one of my favorite movies, Star Trek the Motion Picture.

1987. At a local comic book convention in Los Angeles, I met another person with the same furry interests as I had, and he directed me to a convention in San Diego where there were "gatherings" of other furry fans. So, I went and the result of that first "Furry Party" experience was contacting the editor of a furry-zine called "FURVERSION" Later sequential visits at the comic convention led to my involvement to such publications as ROWERBRAZZLE and FURNOGRAPHY. In 1989 was the first furry con, ConFurence 0 ever held and though the numbers were low…(87, I think….) was a lot of fun.

Since then, I have attended several conventions (ConFurence-west and east, Westercon, San Diego ComicCon, Duckon, Mephit Furmeet, Conifur, Zoniecon, Anthrocon, and soon Mid-west FurFest and Furry Spring Break ….WEEEWW!) and participated in several publications (Genus, Furrlough, Rowrbrazzle, Vision, Shanda Fantasy Arts, Furnography, YARF!, Antarctic Press, Furplay and assorted others)…and put up art in art shows, most of which contain my trademark media, FOAMCORE SCULPTURE. Foamcore was a constant material used in displays at the Tower Records store I worked at for 5 years.

Recently, I have devoted most of my artistic ventures toward the promotion and better recognition of the character MINERVA MINK, the sexy mustelid of Animaniacs fame. Through commissions and prints as well as holding "MIDNIGHT OVER MINERVA" showings at conventions I try to keep this very dear and special character alive and in the furry eye. So far my efforts have yielded some success and I wish to thank all who continue their interest in her.

I am very happy to be chosen Guest Of Honor at the premiere furry convention where I have attended since 0 and in that time have met some of the greatest people I will ever know. I treasure the anthropomorphic media with undying love and great imagination. May all your aspirations be furry ones.

Your Artist and GOH,

BEIRO

Ben Dunn

Publisher Guest of Honor

Bibliography

Born: April 17, 1964
Place: Pingtung, Taiwan
Emigrated: 1965.

Present residence: San Antonio,Texas

Comic work: NINJA HIGH SCHOOL, WARRIOR NUN AREALA, MIGHTY TINY, PROJECT:AKO, CAPTAIN HARLOCK, GIGANTOR, ROBOTECH

Non-comic work: Storyboard artist for THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS.

Blademoor
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Chris Sawyer

The ConFurence Staff

The ConFurence Group

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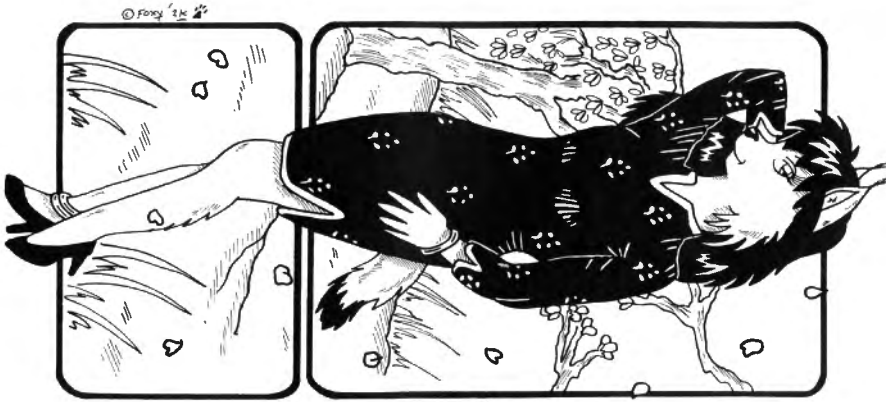
In this world
we walk on the roof of Hell
gazing at flowers

— Issa



Lynx lynx.

LADY DARKFIRE MEETS HER MATCH.
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VERY IMPRESSIVE.
NOW BE QUIET.
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Year of the Dragon

People born under the Chinese astrological sign of the Dragon are natural leaders. Feisty and gifted with power and luck the dragon is the sign most admired by others. Dragons are idealists and perfectionists. This can, however, lead them to be inflexible and unwilling to compromise.

Dragons are dynamic and delightful to be around. But beware their flames of aggression and determination. Irritable and stubborn, the dragon has a tendency to speak before thinking things through. Despite this, nine times out of ten, a dragon's opinions are worth listening too.

People born under this sign can tend to be a bit proud and snobbish, They are easily impressed by material factors such as money, wealth, prestige and rank. However, they can also be very generous.

Gifted, intelligent and willing a dragon is sure to shine no matter which career path is chosen. Indeed, the dragon always gets what he or she wants - no matter what the cost. So be careful in matters of the heart. A dragon can be the cause of much heartache and despair.

In love the Dragon is best suited to the Rat, Tiger, Pig or Rabbit, whose gentler natures will calm the dragon's fires. But they may find conflict with the Ox, Horse and Dog.

Famous people born under the Year of the Dragon include Bruce Lee and Florence Nightingale.

Rat	1924	1936	1948	1960	1972	1984	1996
Ox	1925	1937	1949	1961	1973	1985	1997
Tiger	1926	1938	1950	1962	1974	1986	1998
Rabbit	1927	1939	1951	1963	1975	1987	1999
Dragon	1928	1940	1952	1964	1976	1988	2000
Snake	1929	1941	1953	1965	1977	1989	2001
Horse	1930	1942	1954	1966	1978	1990	2002
Sheep	1931	1943	1955	1967	1979	1991	2003
Monkey	1932	1944	1956	1968	1980	1992	2004
Rooster	1933	1945	1957	1969	1981	1993	2005
Dog	1934	1946	1958	1970	1982	1994	2006
Boar	1935	1947	1959	1971	1983	1995	2007

This Year for Your Animal

Rat: This is a year to avoid indecision. It may be that many opportunities present themselves, especially in your career. However, these will not stay open forever. Be prepared to take on more responsibility.

Ox: Expect to feel the full force of the volatility of the Angry Dragon. This is going to need a calm head and resolve to see things through, even when they don't go as planned.

Tiger: The Tiger's natural brilliance does not shine well in Dragon years. Be patient however, as next year favors the tiger well.

Rabbit: Following your own animal year, the Dragon year is going to be a disappointment by comparison. Be realistic.

Dragon: Enjoy your year. Many opportunities will emerge to develop in all spheres of your life, but remember, this is an Angry Dragon year, and so avoid impulsive behavior.

Snake: Beware of being fooled by other people this year; indeed, whatever people may say, be wary of it: it may lead to tension within relationships.

Horse: Excuse the pun, but this year is a time to draw in the reins. Keep your head down and avoid confrontation.

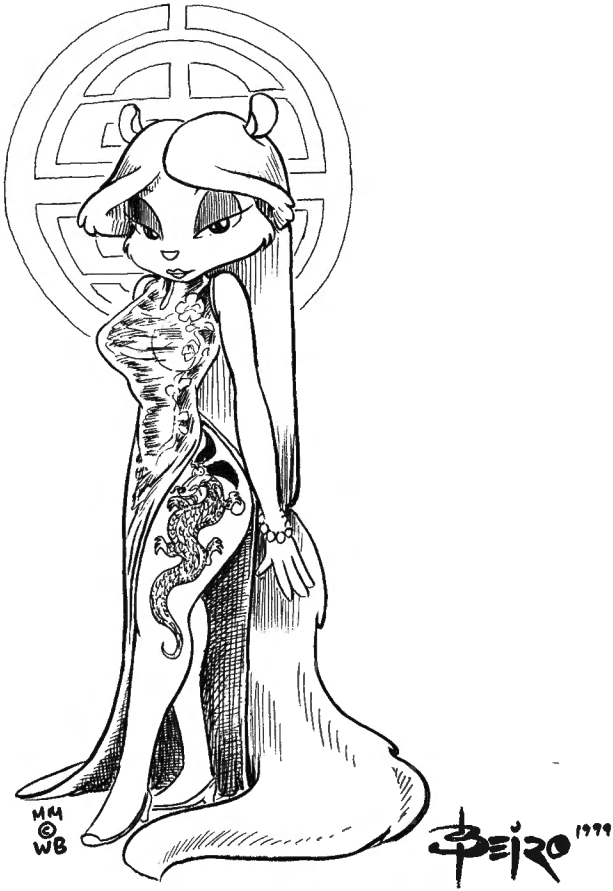
Ram: If last year was a year of parties, this year will be a year of hard work with little to show for it at the end.

Monkey: Don't be monkeying about too much this year as dangers are all around, and may lead to personal injury. Overall, however, a good year to seize opportunities and move forward.

Rooster: Fame may come your way this year. If not, it is still a good year for you in terms of personal happiness.

Dog: Keep a low profile this year, there are likely to be a number of obstacles in your way. Energy fighting against these may well be better conserved for better times.

Pig: An excellent year for you to build foundations for the future, both in terms of personal development and career development. Seize the opportunities this year offers.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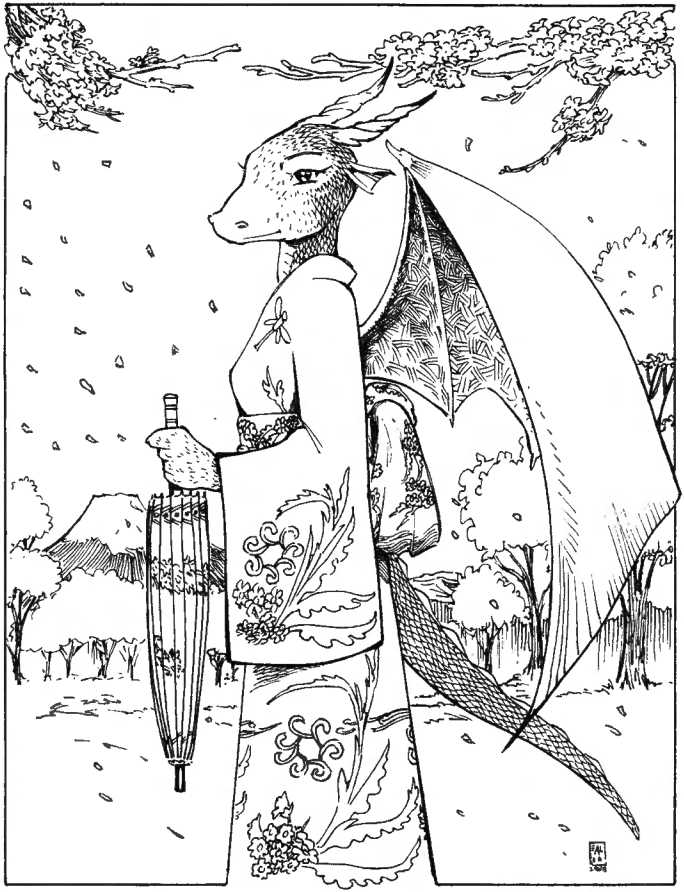

The Dragon in Myth & Legend

From the Chinese Information and Culture Center (www.taipei.org)

The year 2000 in the Western calendar marks the beginning of a new millennium and coincides with the ***keng chen*** year of the Chinese astrological system-the Year of the Dragon.

Throughout China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and Indochina, the image of the dragon appears frequently in myth, legend, and art. And in China, the very heart of this "dragon culture," it has played a pivotal role in history. No wonder the Chinese consider themselves the "descendants of the dragon."

But just what is a "dragon," this product of the imagination and the only animal of the Chinese astrological system not found in the natural realm?

Quoting Wang Fu of the Eastern Han Dynasty in his ***Literary Expositor***, Luo Yuan of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) has said, "Wang Fu says that depictions of creatures with the head of a horse and the body of a snake are commonly considered dragon images. But dragons actually have three sections and nine likenesses. The three connected sections are: from the head to the upper leg, from the leg to the abdomen, and from the abdomen to the tail. The nine likenesses are: horns of a stag, head of a camel, eyes of a demon, neck of a snake, belly of a clam, scales of a fish, talons of an eagle, paws of a tiger, and ears of an ox." The product of a special spiritual culture, the dragon combines features from many different animals, including the body of a snake, and elements of fish, birds, and mammals. One of the auspicious animals of ancient China, the dragon's exalted status has had a significant influence on the daily lives and culture of the Chinese for the past 5,000 years.

One can thus see that the dragon appears in many forms and embodies the divine creative force of the universe. More contemporary depictions of the dragon, however, follow Wang Fu's prescription stating that the dragon has "three sections and presents nine likenesses," making the dragon an amalgamation of characteristics from all kinds of animals and the spiritual ancestor of all living things. Even human beings are considered the descendants of the dragon.

Images of the dragon, drawn from the unique artistic imagination of China, appear in furniture, household utensils, architecture, temples, vessels, vehicles, garments, lacquer ware, works of bronze and jade, and commercial designs. Ancient documents show that the major myths and legends surrounding the dragon include:

I. ***Snake Myths***: Fu Hsi, a legendary ruler who invented the Eight Trigrams used for divination, and taught humans to farm and fish, is depicted with a human face and the body of a snake.

II. ***Family Totems:*** In addition to being tribal symbols, totems also represent shared blood ties. By virtue of its spiritual character and power, the dragon was the animal most revered by the Han and Miao ethnic groups.

III. ***Vehicle of the Immortals***: The earliest records describing the use of dragon boats appear during the reign of Chou Muwang (Chou Dynasty, 1111-249 B.C.). Much later, dragon boat races evolved into a folk celebration known as the "Dragon Boat Festival," which commemorates the patriot and poet Chu Yuan. According to legend, the sun god Hsiho also rode a horrless dragon over the horizon, an image that came to represent the setting sun and the coming of night.

IV. ***Deities***: Legend has it that the "divine dragon" used his tail to dredge a river, helping the Emperor Yu, founder of the Hsia Dynasty (2183-1752 B.C.), drain water off flooded farmland. After becoming the spiritual overseer of water, the dragon was also vested with the power to conjure clouds and rain. Thus, both the Han and Miao performed dragon dances seeking favorable weather and good harvests.

V. ***Imperial Authority***: As a symbol of supernatural power, the dragon has been linked with the emperor ever since the Han Dynasty (B.C. 206-220 A.D.), providing spiritual justification for exercising imperial prerogative and absolute power. After the dragon image became the sole province of the emperor, all articles for his daily use were emblazoned with the Chinese character for "dragon", including "dragon robes" and the "dragon throne." The emperor's face was also referred to as the "dragon visage.")

Liu An, king of Huainan during the reign of Han Wudi (141-87 B.C.), wrote a philosophical text known as Huainanzi. In Chapter IV of that treatise, entitled "Earthly Exegesis," Liu An gives a primitive evolutionary theory, citing the dragon as the original ancestor of all birds, mammals, fish, and crustaceans.

Dragons can be classified according to the legend that the "dragon begat nine sons." These nine sons were not, however, dragons in form, and each had a different temperament and distinct natural attributes.

The first son, the ***pihsi*** (also known as the ***pahsia***), resembles a large tortoise and is capable of carrying heavy loads. This creature's physical characteristics are the origin of the heavy, tortoise-shaped bases that support stone tablets, such as the nine huge "Imperial Stone Tortoise Steles" at the Chihkan Building in Tainan (dating from the reign of Chienlung, 1736-1795). Although these bases are shaped like tortoises, like most pihsi they also have the head of a hornless dragon ***(chih)***, which identifies them as one of the nine sons.

The second son is the ***chih wen***. He takes the form of a mammal. An excellent lookout, he has sharp eyes and a nose for trouble. This is why we commonly see this dragon perched on temple roofs, in the lofts of assembly halls and pagodas, atop houses, or lodged in the far corners of a temple. From all of these strategic positions the ***chih wen*** provides symbolic protection against fires.

The third son, ***pulao***, has a small body and emits a unique chirping sound. Nowadays, this dragon frequently appears on clocks. Legend maintains that the ***pulao*** has a mortal fear of whales. If a whale attacks the ***pulao***, he will shriek loudly. For this reason, if you want your clock's chimes to ring loud and clear, just place a pulao atop the clock with a carved whale set to strike.

The fourth son, the ***pian*** (also known as the ***hsienchang***), resembles a tiger and possesses great power. Some sources say the ***pian*** is rather fond of disputes and legal suits, and it thus appears on the doors of government courts and the entryways to prisons in traditional China.

The fifth son, the legendary ***taotie***, is a ferocious animal that has a voracious appetite. It appears on the lid of the ***ding*** (an ancient cauldron) and became the most important decorative design on ancient Chinese bronze works.

The sixth son, the ***kungfu***, has an affinity for water, so it appears on bridge pillars. It is also known as the ***fankong***, which likes to drink.

The seventh son is the ***yazi***. Because the ***yazi*** is said to delight in killing, his image is often imprinted on swords and other weapons.

The eighth son is the ***chinni*** (or ***suanni***). This dragon looks like a lion and has a natural affinity for fireworks. Said to be fond of sitting in one place, it commonly appears on incense burners.

The ninth son, the ***chiaotu***, resembles a mollusk. Because this dragon is fond of closing up (like many mollusks), it usually appears on doors.

In addition, there are many "monsters" related to the dragon, such as the ***aoyu***, a beast with the head of a dragon and body of a fish, and the yuan, which has the head of a dragon and body of a turtle. Other "relatives" have the head of a dragon and the body of a human, the body of a dragon and the face of a human, the head of a dragon and the body of a bird (or vice versa), or the head of a dragon and the body of a horse. All of these images exemplify that dragon is indeed a major design motif in Chinese culture.

An understanding of the names below will help us understand the dragon classification system in Chinese culture.

The ***hui*** dragon, which literally means "small snake dragon," got its name from a species of poisonous snake. Dragon images that are very simple, even resembling a lizard, can all be called hui dragons. This type is considered the most primitive of dragon images.

A ***chiu*** dragon has a squiggly body.

A ***chih*** dragon is a dragon without horns.

A ***kuie*** dragon has a single leg and is associated with music.

A ***ching*** dragon is green and represents the East.

A ***chu*** dragon is a supernatural being, the equivalent of a ***huo*** (fire) dragon.

A ***pan*** dragon is shaped in a coil, the same as the ***chiu*** dragon.

A ***ying*** dragon has wings.

Depictions of other forms of the dragon, such as water, fire, golden, and cloud dragons, are easily identified by their names.

In ancient times, the dragon was considered one of the four supernatural beings, along with the ***chilin***, the phoenix, and the tortoise. It was also considered one of the Four Spirits-the green dragon, the white tiger, the chu chueh (a mythical red bird), and the tortoise-representing the east, the west, the south, and the north, respectively.

The dragon is the fifth of the twelve animals that comprise the Chinese zodiac. It is designated by the character ***chen***, and it corresponds to the hours from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. ***Chen*** also has meanings associated with the word ***zhen***: the stirring of the originating force of the universe; thunder and lighting; a simultaneous release of sound and light; the natural process of plant growth; and any powerful upward-moving force. The dragon, due to its close association with these primal natural forces, is considered the supreme spiritual being and the source of all life.

Possessing the ability to conjure clouds and rain, the dragon has characteristics of both a rain god and a water god. Often depicted with parts of its body obscured by clouds, the notion that "one can see the head of the divine dragon, but not the tail" reflects both the dragon's ever-changing image and unpredictable nature.

The dragon also plays an important role in the folk beliefs in Taiwan. Because sea travel was relatively perilous in the oceans that surround Taiwan, the original inhabitants of the island both worshipped and feared the dragon because of its ability to conjure up wind and waves. Temples dedicated to the Goddess Matsu were also required to pay homage to the "four great dragon kings," or a single dragon spirit. A separate temple in honor of the dragon could also be set up to procure protection for ships at sea. Floods, tidal waves, and other natural disasters were also considered within the scope of their powers.

Dragon images are frequently carved inside buildings. These wall-dragons become symbolic guardians that, according to superstition, use their powers and control of water and rains to protect buildings from fires. These folk stories and mythologies that have developed over the years are indeed a natural manifestation of the collective cultural imagination of the Chinese.

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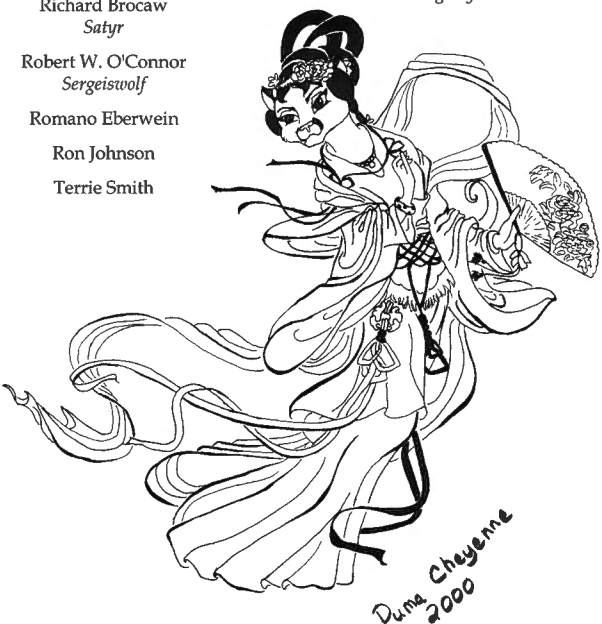

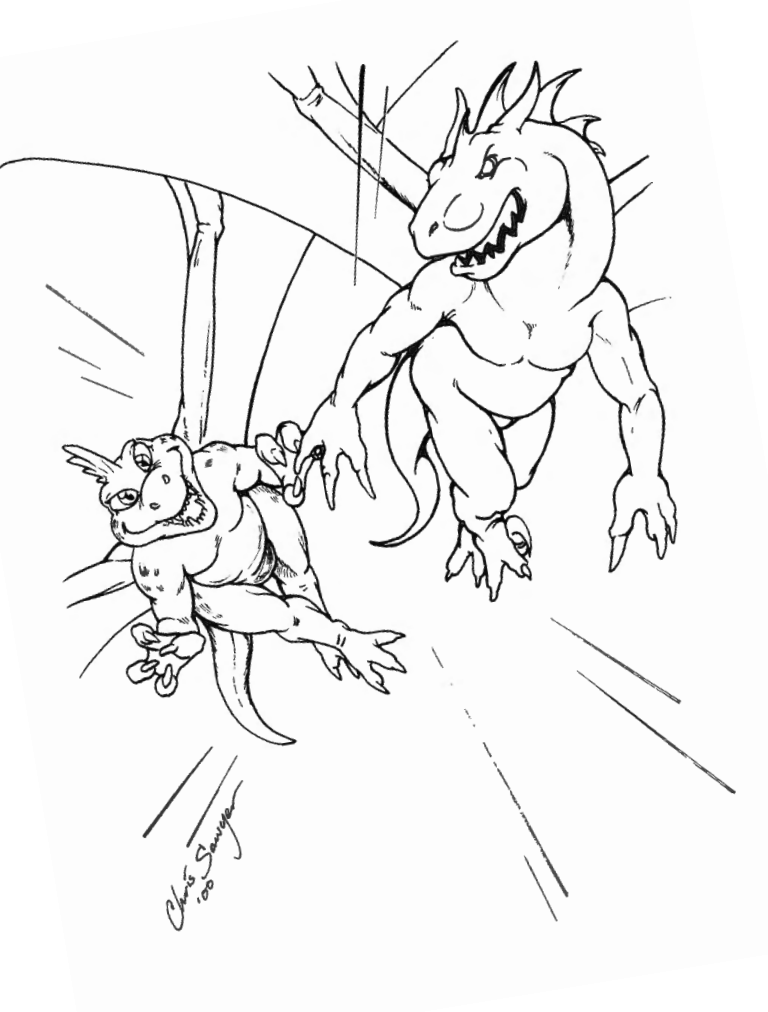
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OR,
"EAST MEETS WEST."
©1990 Ray D. Rowden II

MIGHT

HUA MEI

The decreasing world panda population received a small boost with the birth of a giant panda cub at the World-Famous San Diego Zoo on August 21, 1999. She was given her name in ceremonies at the Zoo on Dec. 1, 1999. She is Hua Mei (pronounced Hwa May) which means "China USA." The cub's name, a closely held secret, was selected by the Chinese State Forestry Administration. Although Hua Mei translates into "China USA," the Chinese words have several meanings. "Hua" also can be interpreted as magnificent or splendid. "Mei" signifies pretty or beautiful.

Hua Mei's parents, Bai Yun and Shi Shi arrived at the San Diego Zoo on Sept. 10, 1996, to begin a 12-year conservation study. Hua Mei is the first North American giant panda birth in a decade.

Most people know that pandas are from China. But they only live in a small wild area of far western China. Whatever the number of pandas surviving in the wild, it is quite clear that the giant panda will become extinct in the next century unless more steps are taken to protect its habitat. It is estimated that the giant pandas now exist in about 35 isolated populations and that most of these contain fewer than 20 individuals.

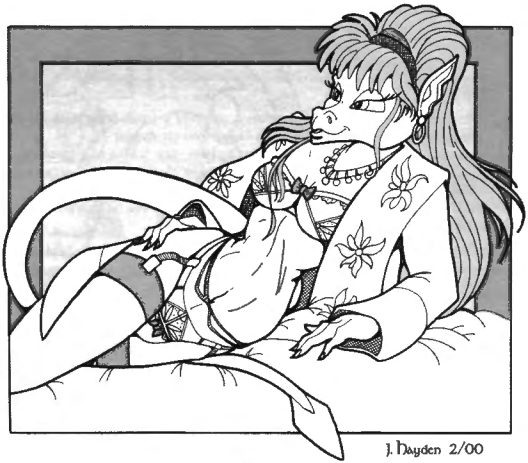
The main threat to the survival of the pandas is the destruction of their habitat. Cattle, sheep and goats graze on any emerging seedlings and prevent regeneration of the forest, and their hooves loosen the thin mountain soil. In the last 30 years Sichuan has lost some 30 percent of its forests, and more than half of the natural forest vegetation has been destroyed or disturbed so badly that it no longer provides suitable panda habitat

The giant panda itself appeared suddenly during the late Pliocene or early Pleistocene, perhaps no more than two to three million years ago. Panda fossils have been found in Burma, Vietnam, and particularly in early in eastern China, as far north as Beijing.

In the second century AD the giant panda was a rare and semi-divine animal in China. In the Han dynasty (206 BC-AC 24) the emperor's garden in the then capital Xian held nearly 40 rare animal species, of which the panda was the most highly treasured, and the poet Bai Juyi (AD 772-846) credited the panda with the power to prevent disease and exorcise evil spirits. Panda skins appear scattered throughout the Chinese imperial records, as gifts or tribute on great occasions of states. But the animal was totally unknown outside the secretive "Middle Kingdom" until the declining Qing Dynasty was slowly forced to open its doors to trade and Christianity towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Christian missionaries played a central role in making Chinese wildlife known to the West, collecting plants and animals from the areas around their missions and sending them back to their native lands.

To learn more about Hua Mei and see current pictures of her on the 'panda cam', visit the San Diego Zoo's website at:
http://www.sandiegozoo.org



J. Hayden 2/00

WRITING TO AN OLD FLAME

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MP2000

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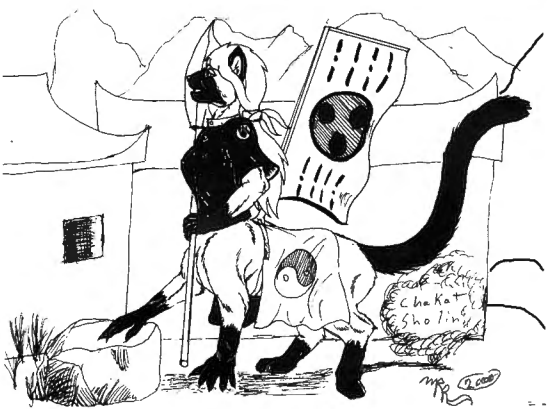


LAPSANG SOUCHONG

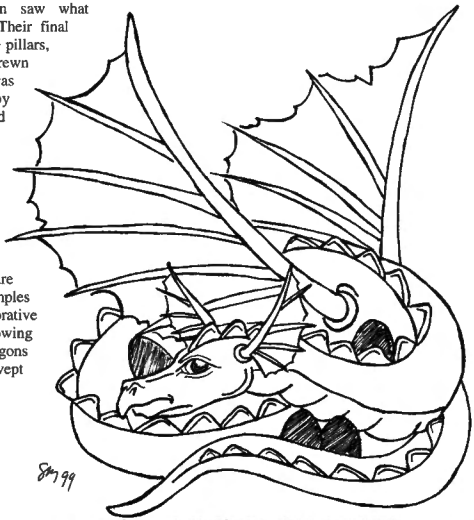
Lu Pan and the Dragon

In this legend, Lu Pan, the patron saint of carpenters, builds a magnificent mansion. He asked the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea if he could borrow the Dragon Palace to use as a model for his new home. The Dragon King agreed to lend him the palace, but only for three days. Even though Lu Pan worked day and night, when the deadline for returning the palace arrived, he had only completed a very basic structure, devoid of details or ornamentation. To extend the deadline, Lu Pan came up with an ingenious plan: he nailed the palace firmly to the ground so the Dragon King could not take it back.

On the third night came wind and rain, and the Dragon King dispatched several "little dragons" to lead the "crab generals and regiments of prawns and fish" in a massive march to reclaim the palace. But because the Dragon Palace was nailed down, the troops' night long efforts to take back the palace were unsuccessful.

The aquatic hordes anxiously tried to twist the palace free. The little dragons stamped their feet and tried to wrench the stone pillars from the ground, but no matter how they tried, the palace wouldn't budge. Some climbed up to the roof to seek divine assistance, but no help was forthcoming from heaven or earth. And at dawn of the following day, the little dragons perished when they were exposed to the hot rays of the rising sun.

That morning Lu Pan saw what happened to the dragons. Their final poses were imprinted on the pillars, and their bodies were strewn about on the roof. He was suddenly struck by inspiration: their bodies and imprints, just as they lay on the façade of the palace, formed a perfect, beautiful composition. He painted the dragons where they were, not as corpses, but with all their original vigor and awesome power. This is why dragon images are found everywhere in temples today, even in decorative woodcarvings of billowing waves, which feature dragons carved into their upswept curves.



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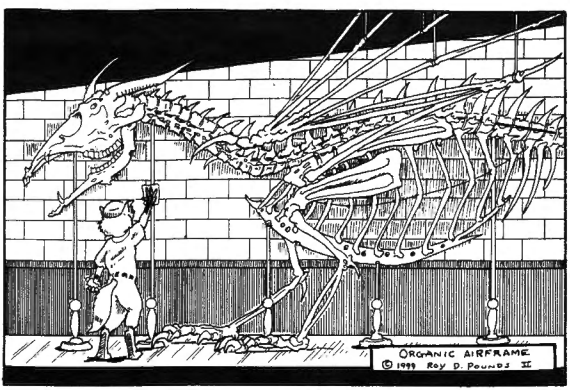

EAST MEETS WEST

CAROLYNA COUGAR '00

The *Bazil Broketail* Series by Christopher Rowley

Review by Fred Patten

As you can tell by the titles of the second, third and fourth novels, this is an adventure fantasy series. "A Battle Dragon's Best Friend Is His Boy", reads the front-cover blurb. "The adventures of Bazil Broketail and his dragonboy, Relkin." Despite Bazil's title billing, it is Relkin and the other humans who are usually the main focus of the action, but the anthropomorphic dragons appear frequently enough to make the series of definite interst to 'morph fans.

Bazil Broketail
Maps. NYC, Penguin/NAL: Roc Books, August 1992, 476 pages.
A Sword for a Dragon
Maps. NYC, Penguin/NAL: Roc Books, April 1993, 480 pages.
Dragons of War
Maps. NYC, Penguin/Dutton Signet: Roc Books, November 1994, 494 pages.
Battledragon
Maps. NYC, Penguin/Dutton Signet: Roc Books, October 1995, 416 pages.
A Dragon at World's End
Maps. NYC, Penguin/Dutton Signet: Roc Books, February 1997, 412 pages.
The Dragons of Argonath
Maps. NYC, Penguin/Dutton Signet: Roc Books, February 1998, 429 pages.
Dragon Ultimate
Maps. NYC, Penguin/Dutton NAL: Roc Books, February 1999, viii + 373 pages.

The world of Ryetelth, like Tolkien's Middle Earth, has a complex geography and political history. The main action takes place on the northern continent of Ianta's east coast, in the Argonath region dominated by the Empire of the Rose. (There are a couple of maps in each of the first four volumes, and one in each of the last three.) The forces of Good are guided by the Sisters of the Benevolent Mission, a euphemistic name for a quasi-religious society of powerful witches who control the Empire's Office of Insight, a wizardly equivalent of military intelligence. Their adversaries are the Masters of Doom, headquartered in the dread Empire of Padmasa in the southern continent of Eigo.

The Empire of the Rose is actually a confederation of human kingdoms forced to unite because none are individually strong enough to withstand the Doom's armies of fearsome monsters. Much of each story is taken up with the political intrigue in the Empire, which is roughly similar to that of the 13th- to 17th-century Holy Roman Empire and neighboring Italian city-states. The individual kingdoms within the Empire of the Rose jockey for power among themselves, secretly abetted by agents of Padmasa who use assassination to remove strong leaders and bribery to promote incompetent leaders who will weaken the Empire. There are also diplomatic entanglements between the Empire and the distant Empire of Ourdh (based on 15th- to 18th-century India).

All the kingdoms must supply soldiers for the united Imperial army, which defends the whole Empire against the Doom's foul troops of necromantically-bioengineered monsters. One of the Empire's key military assets is its Dragon Squadrons, comprised of giant reptiles who have joined the humans in their war against Padmasa -- to the unease of many of the humans. Naturally, the agents of Padmasa try their hardest to aggravate this prejudice.

> *"Lagdalen gasped. Looming behind the boy was a battledragon, standing ten feet tall, with olive green hide and big black eyes that fixed themselves on her most intently."* (*Bazil Broketail*, pg. 15)

> *"The monster's face split into a terrifying smile, with two-inch fangs bared over a long green, forked tongue. It spoke with the characteristic sibilant hiss of dragon speech. 'Well, miss, you best call me by my name -- Bazil of Quosh, at your service.'*

> *At which the dragon reared erect and stood to attention with enough energy to make the ground shake, while he snapped her a crisp legionaire salute."* (*ibid*, pg. 16)

> *"On the whole the Dragon Laws had preserved the peace since the two races had joined in common desperation to fight the dread enemy of Padmasa with its hordes of trolls, imps and weres, all bred in unholy ways from living animals."* (pg. 31)

Bazil and his companion, Relkin Orphanboy, are both 14 (although this is closer to an adult age for dragons). They have come from a country village to the metropolis of Marneri to enlist in a New Legion that is being raised

for the army. There are more volunteers than there are openings, so the recruits are to be chosen in a trial by combat:

"In the first combat Bazil was drawn one on one against Smilgax, a taller dragon, a 'hard green' from the county of Troat. [...]

'He's big,' said Bazil quietly fingering the straps on his shield. When standing on his hind legs, for combat, Baz was just under ten feet tall. His opponent was six inches taller and somewhat wider as well. [...]

With a surge they moved together, both swinging, and their sixty-pound blades rang off each other with fat sparks aflame. [...]

Bazil defended, gave ground, used his shield with good effect and then swung his tail mace into play with a roundhouse sweep that cracked hard on Smilgax's helm and left his defensive countermove far behind. [...]

Once again Bazil made play with his tail, but this time Smilgax was quicker with his own and their tail maces rang together in a minor key as they thrust and grappled and shoved shields against each other." (pgs. 36-37)

The natural history of dragons is presented in small bits and pieces, but most of it is in the first novel. The dragons who have allied with humans are flightless and are generally known as wyverns, for their lack of wings and for their habit of often standing on their hind feet in emulation of their human neighbors. Feral dragons, who still live in the wild north, have wings and go on all fours but are intelligent. The two breeds do not usually get along well:

"She rounded on him; she had immense wings, like all wild dragons, and now they unfolded and seemed to fill the sky. She seemed to bore into him with those brilliant yellow eyes and dilated red pupils. Her teeth flashed, long rows of saber-sharp white curves.

Bazil felt a thunderbolt of dragon love.

'Bazil!' she mocked. 'A slave name for a slave dragon. You are one of them! One of those crawling, ground-bound worms that fights for the humans.'

'And you are a most beautiful sight, the most beautiful I have ever seen,' he said humbly.

'What?' The eyes flashed. 'Did you not hear me scorn you?'

'When you are angry, your eyes get very big. Did you know that? It is lovely to watch.'

'I--' She stopped. She blinked; he was ground-bound, he had no wings, but he was impressive in a large, heavyset way. These human things, the helmet and the immense steel shield, they gave even more bulk to him.

And he did seem to know how to charm one. It was quite remarkable, this creature actually had some manners!

But he was wingless! There were just some disgusting nubs on his back and shoulders to suggest where wings should be. She knew she could never love a male who had no wings. She drew herself up to her full height, and noted that she was definitely half a head shorter than he and certainly less massive. This was quite disconcerting." (pg. 252)

Details of dragon diet, dragon customs and lore, and more are scattered throughout the series. Bazil and Relkin win their enlistment in the New Legion, which becomes the 109th Dragon Squadron. As novel follows novel, the 109th is transferred from one command to another but is always in the thick of action. By the third novel Relkin is in his late teens and the two are the 109th's oldest and most experienced surviving veterans. The action is mostly Roman Legion-style fighting, which Rowley plots and develops with convincing military expertise. The dragons are more than just big soldiers; their reptilian attributes are taken into account in clever ways. The "Bazil" novels will be of interest to fans of military action, of sword-&-sorcery, and of anthropomorphic adventure equally.

Rowley has written an eighth novel set in the world of Ryetelth; *The Wizard and the Floating City*. It does not feature any of the "Bazil" cast or any 'morphs at all.

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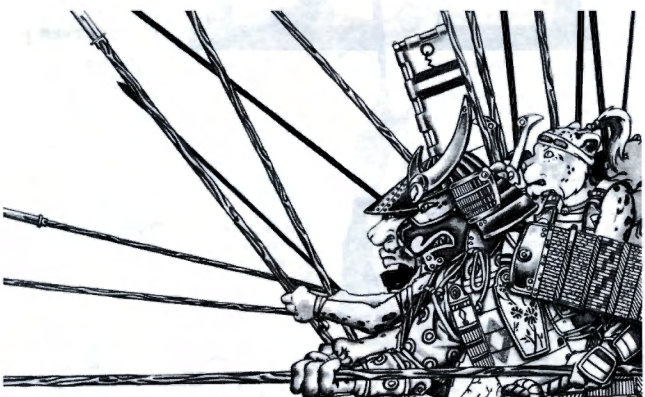
GRRRWOLF '00

CFAC

The ConFurence Group would like to re-introduce a group of individuals who have assisted our little convention for several years in the past, but now with a new name: CFAC. This is the same group of people who in past years have been called "Security" or "Medical" but now work the convention in a more structured role.

CFAC has been combined into a single group to encompass both policy enforcement duties and on-site medical assistance. Due to California State regulations, we were required to come up with a name that did not use the term "Security" in it (which would imply that they are all state-licensed security guards… they are not) and so this group has been named CFAC.

CFAC's primary task is to ensure that the convention-going experience is enjoyable by everyone, and to remind people about various behavior policies if and only if that becomes necessary. CFAC will also have qualified medical technicians on call at any time during the weekend in case of emergencies, or even if you just need a little help with soothing a paper-cut. All CFAC members will be radio-linked to the base station and convention operations while on duty, allowing us to respond quickly with answers or any assistance that may be necessary.



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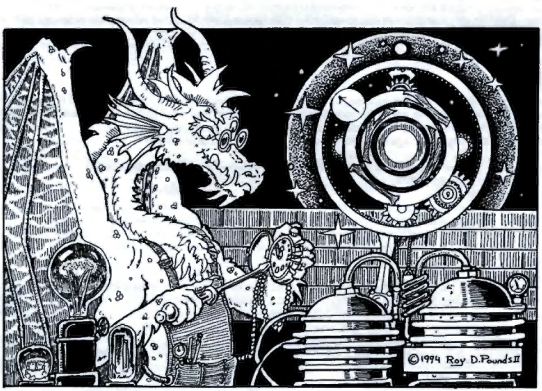

CELESTIAL MECHANIC #3

ConFurence 11

Notice

ConFurence 11 General Behavior Policies

The ConFurence Group is dedicated to making the convention-going experience an enjoyable one for everyone involved. In order to assure this, all of our behavior policies are designed to be inclusive of the entire group's needs, but with ***discretion*** as the key-underlying theme.

1. Event Admission.

(a) ConFurence functions are taking place in privately rented function space and are therefore not considered a "Public Area" as defined by law. Permission to enter function space at ConFurence 11 is granted to attending members of the convention only.

(b) The term "areas publicly accessible to members" refers to those areas of the convention during specified hours that will allow anyone with an attending ConFurence 11 membership to enter. This is not to be confused with a "Public Area" as defined by law.

(c) "Adults Only areas of the convention" are those areas where during specified hours any attending member of the convention who has reached 18 years of age by April 6, 2000 may enter. Minors attempting to enter Adults Only areas of the convention will be in violation of the General Behavior Policies. Badges issued to minors will be clearly marked so that it will be easier to prevent them from entering Adults Only areas of the convention.

2. Public Appearance.

(a) Convention attendees are requested to refrain from offensive, vulgar, or indecent presentations of themselves or their attire. This includes, but is not limited to refraining from wearing any items that depict male or female genitalia, obscene words or phrases, or using offensive gestures.

(b) While using any of the function space at the convention, shirts and shoes must always be worn. It is against various health and safety regulations to walk around barefoot anywhere in the hotel, except in a private hotel room or inside the pool area.

3. Photography.

(a) It is asked that if you are taking pictures at the convention that you do so for your own personal enjoyment. If you are publishing pictures taken in any of the convention's function space, you are urged to ask the subject of your picture before publishing their image. This includes, but is not limited to distributing prints to third parties alone or as part of a collection, publishing the image on a network-accessible computer, or in relation to a new or magazine article about the convention.

(b) If at any time you are requested by any member of the convention to not to take their picture, doing so will be in violation of the General Behavior Policy.

4. Weapons Policy.

(a) It is unlawful to carry a concealed weapon of any kind without a State-issued concealed weapons permit. In addition, concealed weapons are specifically prohibited in any function space at the convention.

(b) Weapons that are not illegal to carry in the State of California, Orange County, or the City of Irvine may be worn as part of a costume, but only for display. CFAC may require that you "peace-band" the weapon to ensure that it has not been drawn.

5. Enforcement.

(a) All members of CFAC have the right to temporarily revoke your membership to the convention. CFAC operates under the "3-strikes and you're out" rule, meaning that excessive violations of these General Behavior Policies will result in your membership ID being confiscated and held in Convention Operations. Blatant or more serious violations of these policies may result in your membership being immediately confiscated, at CFAC's discretion.

(b) Having your membership ID confiscated revokes without any additional obligation all attending convention privileges. You will be escorted out of any convention function space, and not permitted to return. We will not do this lightly, nor has it become necessary to do so in the past several years of ConFurence, but we reserve the right to do so should it become necessary.

(c) In case you dispute the reasons for having your membership revoked, you may report to Convention Operations (Con-Ops) and request that the Co-chairs of ConFurence 11 review the situation and determine a resolution. Only the CFAC member who originally revoked your membership, or one of the Co-chairs of the convention can return your membership to you once it has been revoked.

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